

## Promoting Gender Equality Maximizes MCC Investments in Mongolia

Mongolia is a signatory to major international conventions guaranteeing equal rights to women, and gender equality objectives have been enshrined in various national laws and regulations. However, women are not always able to fully realize these rights and opportunities, and gender gaps still persist in the economy and in decision-making.

Recognizing these gaps, MCA-Mongolia, the government entity implementing Mongolia's MCC compact, has worked with MCC assistance to ensure that compact activities and project plans help strengthen women's access to land, training opportunities, subsidized loans for energy efficient products, and health education.



A women living in an urban center consults on the Property Rights project in MCC's Mongolia Compact.

### Implementation Across Five Compact Projects

MCA-Mongolia is integrating a gender focus into all five compact projects: Vocational Education, Property Rights (including the Peri-Urban Land Leasing activity), Health, Energy and Environment, and North-South Road. Each project facilitates gender equality and women's participation in a different way.

## Vocational Education Project

Vocational education institutions seek to link industry skill standards with modern curricula. Although female students predominate at higher levels of general education in Mongolia, there are more male students enrolled in vocational education and training institutions. As part of the Mongolia Compact, female and male students are encouraged to explore non-traditional and higher-paid sectors, and a study is being conducted to better understand how graduates—both male and female—can access the best employment opportunities and benefit Mongolia's economy.

## Property Rights Project

The Property Rights project seeks to improve the system for recognition and accessibility of full property rights by Mongolians, including marginalized groups like low-income and female-headed households. The project provides support to these groups through public outreach and consultation activities as well as guidance for navigating the land privatization process.

*“I have been a single mother and have tried hard in my life, in farming and with my son. With the herder group I feel stronger. With the project, our well and our feed for animals will be taken care of.”*

This project is making headway in understanding different ways in which men and women access land. The project uses data on both male and female title holders, which has revealed that women hold 49 percent of titles in Ulaanbaatar and 36 percent of titles in eight regional *aimag* (provincial) centers.

Women's access to land has been enabled by the practice of noting multiple names on land titles: While titles in just one name are generally regis-

tered in the male name, most titles are registered in multiple names, indicating the value of continuing this practice to ensure women's land rights. This data will be included in Mongolia's electronic Property Registration System and utilized for a National Land Information System to track the progress of gender equality in land titling.

The **Peri-Urban Land Leasing activity** within the Property Rights project is introducing a system for long-term leasing of tracts of pastureland to herder groups, infrastructure investments and training for herders. To ensure equitable participation, the project seeks both male and female signatures on land leases, and is tailoring training to meet expectations of both men and women and respond to women's particular training needs. For the project's expansion areas, applicant herder groups that include low-income and single-parent-headed households—many of which are female-headed—receive a small preference for being included in a short list of herder groups eligible to participate in the program.

One herder woman expressed the benefits of the activity's gender scope, saying, “I have been a single mother and have tried hard in my life, in farming and with my son. With the herder group I feel stronger. With the project, our well and our feed for animals will be taken care of.”

## Health Project

Health project activities in the Mongolia Compact focus on raising awareness for prevention and detection of non-communicable diseases and injuries. Gender-sensitive campaigns are being launched to address specific health behaviors of men and women. Cervical cancer is one of the major causes of illness and death for Mongolian women; one activity under the Health program addresses this prevalence by carrying out Human Papilloma Virus vaccination of ten percent of Mongolian girls aged 11 to 15, which will serve as a pilot test for a larger roll-out.

In addition, over 80 percent of beneficiaries of health worker training are female. (The project also includes a road traffic injuries component, which will focus particularly on men, given their much greater likelihood of being involved in road accidents.)

## Energy and Environment Project

The Energy and Environment project is identifying the most energy-efficient technologies like stoves, insulators and vestibules for residents of *ger* homes (a type of portable housing widely used by Mongolian nomads), and raising awareness among consumers of long-term financial, health and environmental benefits of adopting these technologies. Working with local banks, subsidy programs use a market-driven approach but are tailored to meet the needs of marginalized groups. Since the subsidy component addresses economic vulnerabilities that affect women particularly, and the focus is on a product that is mostly used by women within the household, female-headed households have been strong participants, making up nearly half of all beneficiaries to date.

## North-South Road Project

The North-South Road project is upgrading and constructing over 200 kilometers of road in Mongolia and a 288-meter bridge, and is providing technical assistance to the nation's road repair and maintenance sector. With increased transport and economic activity, however, comes the potential for illicit or harmful behavior. As part of the road activities, the project will incorporate awareness-raising programs on various risks, including HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases, and trafficking in persons, to mitigate potential negative effects.

## Collaboration for Meaningful Change

In all the compact's projects, MCC and MCA-Mongolia are working with both the national and local governments in training and policy implementation activities to ensure sustained improvement. Across the compact, the MCA-Mongolia projects are reaching out to NGOs like the Mongolian Women's Federation and the Gender Equality Center to draw upon their expertise in the field of gender, and to ensure that by working together, the messages and initiatives of the projects will continue to contribute to gender equality in Mongolia.